

Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership

Terms of Reference

The Upper & Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership vision is for our rivers and their catchment to be healthier, richer in wildlife and valued by all.

To achieve this vision the work and objectives of the Partnership can be identified under 8 themes. These themes are detailed in Appendix 3:

1. Remit and Status:

- 1.1 The Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership (UBOCP) aims to bring together relevant partners to work together for the planning and delivery of activities and projects that give improvements to water quality, channel structure and habitat quality/biodiversity in the Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment.
- 1.2 The Water Framework Directive is a key driver, with activity focused around feeding into and influencing the Environment Agency's "Anglian River Basin Management Plan" through a 'Catchment Planning' approach.
- 1.3 The Partnership is unincorporated and is not a legal entity, and cannot hold or expend funds itself.

2. The Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Area:

- 2.1 The Partnership will take an interest over the whole catchment of the Upper and Bedford Ouse, from the source of the River Great Ouse in Buckinghamshire to the boundary with the Old Bedford and Middle Level Catchment near St Ives in Cambridgeshire, and all tributaries throughout this stretch, including the Tove, Ouzel, Ivel, Elstow Brook, Kym and Alconbury Brook. Appendix 1 illustrates the Catchment area.

3. Objectives of the Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership

- 3.1 To work collaboratively on the production of a Catchment Plan, following the River Basin Management production timetable, which will provide a perspective reflecting the key issues and opportunities within the Catchment to improve the environment in line with WFD objectives.
- 3.2 To champion key projects with key decision makers and funders

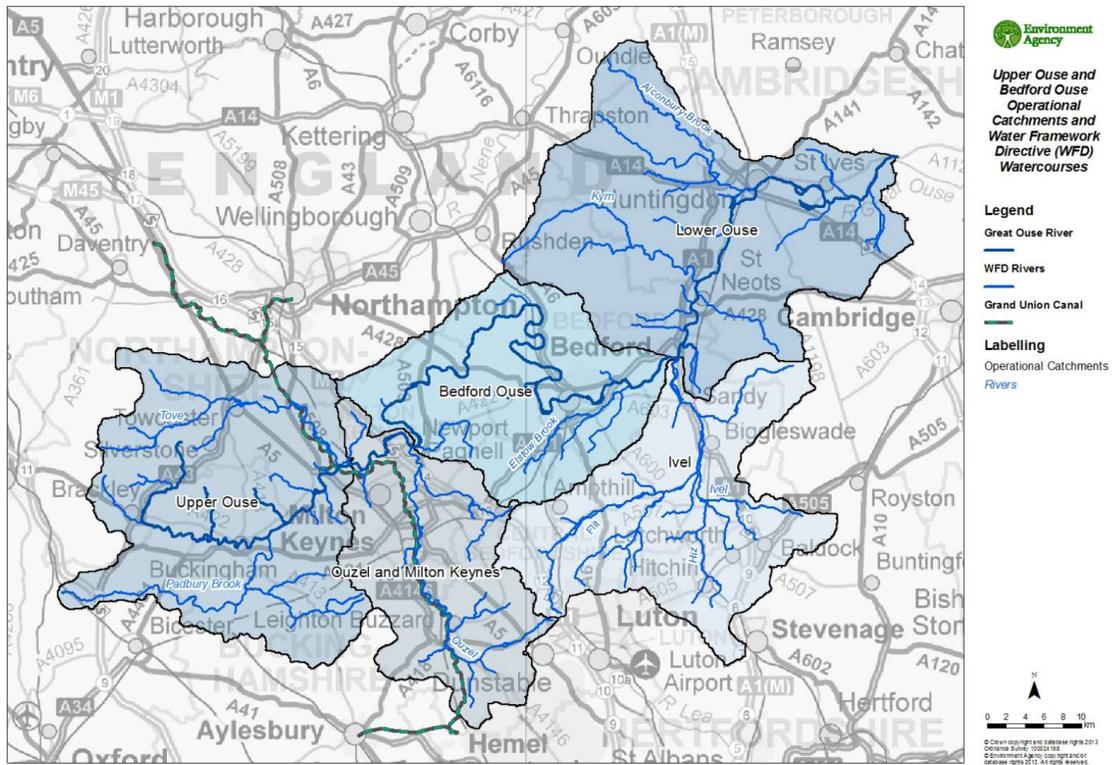
4. Membership, Structure and Meetings

- 4.1 Membership of the UBOCP (Full Partnership) will be open to any organisation or group that has an interest in the remit outlined in (1.1) above, either across the whole of the Catchment or part of it. (Current membership of the UBOCP is identified in Appendix 2.)
- 4.2 Organisations wishing to join the UBOCP will need to contact the Partnership Host, stating their role and reasons for wishing to join.
- 4.3 An organisation can terminate its membership with immediate effect by writing to the Partnership Host.
- 4.4 The Partnership will review its membership annually, and may co-opt new members.
- 4.5 Partners will be expected to attend at least 1 Full Partnership or Working Group meeting each year.
- 4.6 The UBOCP will be able to invite other organisations or individuals to join as members; or to attend specific meetings in response to a specific item or technical need.
- 4.7 The activities of the UBOCP will be overseen by a Core Group. (Current membership of the Core Group is identified in Appendix 2.) Other working groups or sub-groups, with fixed or open timescales, may be set up at the discretion of the Core Group.
- 4.8 Membership of the Core Group will be ratified each year by the Full Partnership. The Core group will have a maximum of 7 organisations; with a minimum of 4 organisations required to be present for meetings to be quorate.
- 4.9 The Core Group will;
 - carry out the decisions of the Full Partnership
 - oversee its business between meetings,
 - draw up programmes and agendas for Partnership meetings
 - consider options, develop ideas and proposals and make recommendations on the work of the UBOCP
 - report back to the Full Partnership on its activities
- 4.10 The Core Group will have the ability to meet and drive activity forward outside of Full Partnership meetings... including through the creation of 'Working Groups'. The Core Group will have the ability to close a working group if considered appropriate to do so. A Working Group should have a Core Group member on it wherever possible.
- 4.11 A Working Group may be created with the approval of the Core Group. Any member/s wishing to create a Working Group should complete the appropriate pro-forma, outlining aims and objectives, and submit to the Host.
- 4.12 Decision making at both the Full Partnership and Core Group meetings will be made by general consensus. Normal practice will be for decisions affecting or relevant to the Full Partnership to be made at Full Partnership meetings. The Core Group may propose decisions to the next Full Partnership meeting for ratification.

- 4.13 Where timescales mean that the process in 4.12 is not possible, the Core Group will have the power to make decisions on behalf of the Full Partnership; a record of the decision and the process by which it was reached will be provided by email and reported to the next Full Partnership meeting.
- 4.14 A Catchment Partnership Host will be selected by the Core Group to act as secretariat, organising meetings, distributing papers, taking minutes and co-ordinating reporting activities. The Catchment Host will lead on the production of the Catchment Plan. (Current Partnership Host is identified in Appendix 2.)
- 4.15 The Catchment Partnership Host will also act as 'Accountable Body' with regard to any funds either received or distributed.
- 4.16 The Catchment Partnership will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair from its membership. The Chair will be responsible for chairing Core Group and Full Partnership meetings and acting as champions for the Partnership and its work.
- 4.17 The frequency of Full Partnership and Core Group meetings will be determined by the stage of the Catchment Planning cycle, current issues, the need for decisions to be made and resources available. There will be a minimum of one Full Partnership meeting and one Core Group meeting per annum.
- 4.18 One Full Partnership meeting per annum will need to include an Annual General Meeting at which the Chair and Vice-Chair roles are elected.
- 4.19 The Partnership will seek to avoid duplication with existing structures and partnerships, working as collaboratively as appropriate.

ToR last updated: June 2023

Appendix 1: The Upper and Bedford Ouse Catchment Map



Appendix 2: Partnership members as at 6th June 2023

- * Anglian Water
- * Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (Catchment Host)
- * Environment Agency
- * The Forest of Marston Vale Trust
- * The Greensand Trust
- * Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

Affinity Water

Bedford Group of Internal Drainage Boards

Bedfordshire Local Nature Partnership

Buckinghamshire County Council

Canal and Rivers Trust

Central Bedfordshire Council

Forestry Commission

GOVET

Great Ouse Rivers Trust

Hertfordshire Countryside Management Service

National Farmers' Union

Natural England

Oakbank

Revlvel

River Restoration Centre

River Thames Conservation Trust

RSPB

The Parks Trust

Wild Trout Trust

*Those members denoted by an asterisk are those that are Core Group members at 6th June, 2023.

Appendix 3 – U&BOCP Vision & Objectives

Vision:

The Upper & Bedford Ouse Catchment Partnership vision is for our rivers and their catchment to be healthier, richer in wildlife and valued by all.

To achieve this vision the work and objectives of the Partnership can be identified under 8 themes:

- Water quality:
 - surface water
 - groundwater
- Water quantity:
 - surface water
 - groundwater
- River function and form
- Biodiversity
- Recreation and amenity
- Community engagement through education and involvement
- Wider engagement
- Resourcing the Partnership and its activities

Water quality

- Improve understanding and awareness of the issues and priorities in surface and ground water quality within the catchment.
- Promote and support opportunities for the use of urban and rural Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and their role in improved water quality.
- Work with land owners/managers and planners/developers to promote sympathetic land management to reduce rural and urban diffuse pollution, maximise uptake of agri-environment 'measures' and encourage them to collaborate at the macro scale.
- Reduce pollution from waste water through influencing and projects.

Water quantity

- Improve understanding and awareness of the issues and priorities in surface and ground water quantity within the catchment.
- Work with land owners/ managers and planners/developers to promote and support opportunities for the use of urban and rural Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and their role in 'natural' water management.

River function and form

- Improve understanding and awareness of river function and form and its importance for ecology/biodiversity/wildlife.
- Work with land owners/managers and planners/developers to encourage sustainable river management to maximise habitat diversity and replicate 'natural' river systems.
- Establish and monitor projects, such as the simple restoration projects funded by the Catchment Partnership Action Fund, as examples of good practice in urban and rural locations. Use these as case studies in promotional materials.

Biodiversity

- Support the work of Local Action Groups (LAGs), such the Flit Valley LAG's work to identify Invasive Non Native Species (INNS) hotspots and take action.
- Support the formation of new LAGs.

Recreation and amenity

- Encourage the use of recreational routes that explore the water environment (for example via the website).
- Where possible, contribute information about the water environment to recreational publications and activities, and promote the work of the Catchment Partnership.

Community engagement (education and involvement)

- Raise awareness through greater understanding of the value of local rivers and issue that affect them.
- Provide opportunities for active community participation through a programme of activities including walkovers, surveying, monitoring and practical work parties/projects. Provide information to partner bodies about how this can benefit their own objectives and how this work can help meet them.
- Engage volunteers in projects to increase understanding and ownership.
- Inspire current and future generations to care about the water environment.
- Overcome myths and misconceptions where possible.
- Engage with all river users and LAGs.
- Support and promote organisations who work with community groups and volunteers to advise and encourage them to promote water catchment objectives (Align to successful events such as Linslade Canal Festival Leighton and Parish Fairs).
- Develop demonstration events and sites to educate and promote the work of the Catchment Partnership.

Wider engagement

- Where possible, provide Partnership response/comments to relevant strategic plan consultations (including commenting via the Local Nature Partnerships)
- Collaborate with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate.
- Provide information and guidance on major development proposals and relevant good practice, case studies and other information in order to facilitate cohesive and relevant responses from individual members.
- Develop and establish consensus amongst the various and disparate bodies and organisations that impact on the water environment

Resourcing the Partnership and its activities

- Develop, and use, a funding strategy that will ensure the Partnership is self sustaining to fund these objectives.
- Develop a promotion and marketing plan to include, for example, using the website, social media/blog, leaflet, local community newsletter links.
- Bid for funding to enable the Partnership's objective's to be achieved.
- Engage businesses to gain their support.

- Develop demonstration events and sites to educate and promote the work of the Catchment Partnership.
- Bang the drum / lobby for longer term funding.
- Collaborate with other Catchment Partnerships to influence at regional/national level.